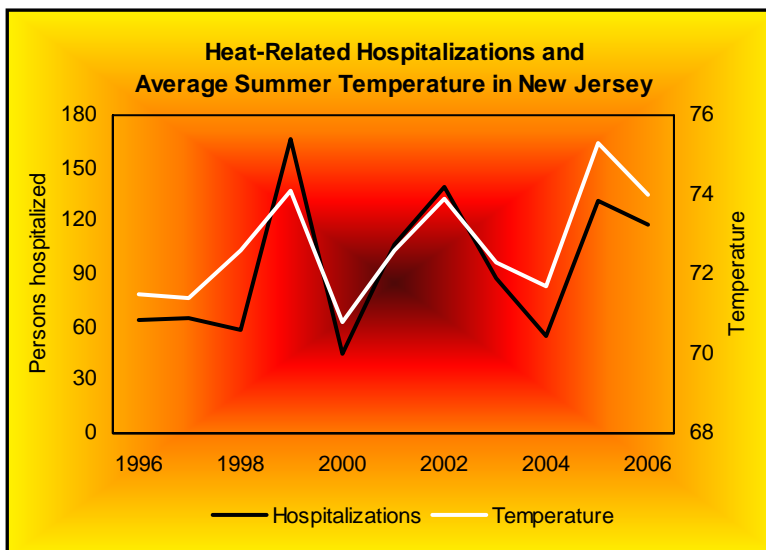


## Beat the Heat! Avoid Heat-Related Illnesses

- ☀ People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. The body normally cools itself by sweating but under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly and very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs.
- ☀ In addition to exacerbating certain preexisting health conditions, overexposure to excessive heat can cause heat stroke, sunstroke, heat collapse, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion due to water depletion or salt depletion.
- ☀ Those at greatest risk for heat-related illness include young children (under 4 years of age), persons 65 and older, persons who are overweight, and persons who are ill or on certain medications.
- ☀ Typically, in New Jersey, fewer than ten people die annually due to excessive heat. However, 30 people died in 1999 and 18 died in 2002, two of the hottest summers on record.



- ☀ Overexposure to summer heat causes between 45 and 170 hospitalizations in New Jersey annually depending on the average outdoor temperature. The majority of those hospitalized in New Jersey are male, aged 65-84, and are hospitalized for 3 or more days.
- ☀ Each year more than 1,200 persons are treated in New Jersey emergency departments for heat-related illness or sunburn.
- ☀ Additionally, there are less severe cases of heat-related illness or sunburn that only require treatment at home.
- ☀ To beat the heat, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend staying in air conditioned buildings; drinking water or other non-alcoholic beverages; wearing lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing; and reducing or eliminating strenuous outdoor activities or doing them during cooler parts of the day.

- ☀ If your home is not air conditioned, spend time in public facilities that are, such as movie theaters, libraries, and shopping malls. While electric fans provide some relief when temperatures are slightly elevated, they will not prevent heat-related illness when the temperature goes above the mid-90s.
- ☀ Check on elderly or ill relatives and neighbors and anyone who does not have air conditioning. Never leave your child, pet, or anyone in a closed car on a hot day.

For more data from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services: [www.nj.gov/health/chs](http://www.nj.gov/health/chs)

For more prevention tips and information on heat-related illnesses from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/)

For first aid tips for heat exhaustion or heat stroke from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000101-d000200/d000105/d000105.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000101-d000200/d000105/d000105.html)

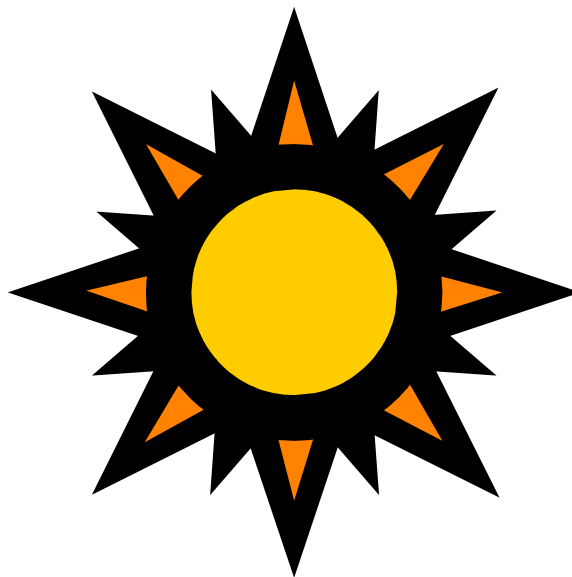
Sources:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics:  
New Jersey 1996-2006 Uniform Billing hospitalization file, unpublished data

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics:  
New Jersey 1996-2005 Multiple Cause of Death Files, unpublished data

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health:  
[Extreme Heat: A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety](#)

U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration:  
[Climate at a Glance](#)  
[Storm Events](#)



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